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ST. CUPID;

OR,

DOROTHY'S FORTUNE.

A Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

As originally acted before Her Majesty at Windsor Castle; and as produced at the Royal Princess's Theatre.

BY DOUGLAS JERROLD.

43546
ac
LL-h.12

LONDON:
BRADBURY & EVANS, 11, BOUVERIE STREET.
1853.

00043546

CHARACTERS REPRESENTED.

—•—

Sir Valentine May	MR. WALTER LACY.
Mr. Under-Secretary Zero	MR. JAMES VINING.
Ensign Belleſleur	MR. G. EVERETT.
Doctor Budd	MR. HARLEY.
Checker	MR. RYDER.
Hawke	MR. F. COOKE.
Trundle	MR. J. CHESTER.
Dorothy Budd	MRS. CHARLES KEAN.
Juno	MRS. WALTER LACY.
Queen Bee	MR. WRIGHT.

SCENE, London and Kensington. Date, 1715.

*** This comedy was originally acted before her Majesty, at Windsor Castle, on the 21st of January, 1853; and produced at the Princess's Theatre on the following evening.

ST. CUPID:

OR,

DOROTHY'S FORTUNE.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Apartment in the Mansion of* MR. UNDER-SECRETARY ZERO.

Enter TRUNDLE, *followed by* HAWKE, *who carries an official box.*

Trundle. Mr. Secretary Zero ordered me not to disturb him before eleven, and if Charles Stuart was at the door; yes, if the Prince himself——

Hawke. Prince! We of the government call him rebel, pretender.

Trundle. And a fit name for him too, at a distance; but depend on't, folks will change it for his highness, if he once gets to London.

Hawke. Get to the moon! Why there's a hundred thousand pounds offered for the madman, dead or alive.

Trundle. As madmen go, that's a large price. Dead or alive! Poor fellow!

Hawke. Hark you. In these times there can be but two sides. Now, as the servant of a cabinet minister, your politics——

Trundle. Cabinet! My cabinet is my place—my politics, my perquisites—my side, my inside. Therefore, I don't call Mr. Secretary until—

Hawke. You must!

Trundle. I won't!

Enter SIR VALENTINE MAY.

Valentine. How now? What brawl's here?

Hawke. My duty, sir,—

Trundle. And my duty, sir,—

Valentine. (*To* HAWKE.) Speak you.

Hawke. I come, Sir Valentine, from the office. Bear letters that—

Valentine. Oh, the old errand. Go, tell your master—

Trundle. Sir, my master said eleven, and (*Clock strikes*) I'm gone, sir; for now the clock says eleven, too. [*Exit.*

Valentine. Letters, eh? From the north and—

Hawke. The north and elsewhere.

Valentine. We are much beholden to his pretendership. He has shaken London like a feather-bed. The very guards encamped in Hyde Park to face the Stuart and sciatica.

Re-enter TRUNDLE.

Trundle. My master will be here, Sir Valentine; but sends the key that,—

Valentine. Good. (*Takes key. Exit* TRUNDLE.) As under-secretary's secretary 'tis little enough I do: and luckily my uncle's such a glutton at official fare, he hardly leaves me the crumbs. (*Opens box.*) Why, what a batch is here!

Hawke. These the original letters—these the copies we have taken.

Valentine. The true rebels, and their speaking portraits. Undone fools! Pandora's box without hope of clergy.

Hawke. Some of 'em droll, Sir Valentine: saving your presence, devilish droll.

Valentine. Well, that government is still the safest that makes treason laughable.

Hawke. Oh, Sir Valentine, we all laugh at the rising; laugh like loyal subjects. Still, there's matter in these letters that—

Valentine. Mr. Hawke, you are, I believe, the chief hand at this nice surgery?

Hawke. Surgery, Sir Valentine?

Valentine. You best can operate upon written men, for such are men's letters? Best can open the locked lips of wax—best take out the heart of the secret—the brain of the purpose, and that so

the patient dealt upon dreams not of the operation, until ay off he sees the hurdle and the axe? Eh, good Hawke?
. I hope, sir, I serve my country.
Valentine. You may wait. (HAWKE *bows and exit.*) The times may justify the betrayal; yet, dealing with these broken confidences—

(*Enter* MR. UNDER-SECRETARY ZERO, *leaning on* TRUNDLE. *Exit* TRUNDLE.)

Not so well this morning, uncle?
Zero. Well, Val? How can I be well? With me, the gout's a state barometer. I knew by my knee that the pretender had landed, and last night I had twinges of all those letters, in every joint of my toes.
Valentine. (*Half-aside.*) The spirit of the seer prophesying thro' gout!
Zero. Well, what's the worst treason?
Valentine. (*Turning over letters.*) I see none—scent none.
Zero. Ha, Val; you've no eye for a plot—no nose. Once, I was like yourself.
Valentine. And now you'd see Guy Fawkes's tinder in a dowager's snuff-box; and smell his matches in a spinster's hartshorn.
Zero. And why not? But the treason there awaits us. Read, Val; read.
Valentine. (*Reads.*) "From Alexander Macthistle of the Canongate to Duncan Haggis, of the Golden Mull, tobacconist, Little Britain."
Zero. Scot to Scot. Go on.
Valentine. (*Reads.*) "Ye shall learn by these, Duncan, that the snuffs are no yet prepared for the London market. They yet need a little scorching to tak' the noses o' the Southrons."
Zero. Noses of the Southrons! Hm!
Valentine. (*Reads.*) "Am glad to ken ye're getting on so brawly. Fergus tells me your Highlander looks bonny in his new paint."
Zero. Highlander! New paint! Hm!
Valentine. (*Reads.*) "And for the glory of puir Scotland, I hope soon to hear of a thousand mair in the streets o' London."
Zero. Now, Sir Valentine May, for a lesson in state craft. What is really in that letter?
Valentine. Why, Scotch snuff in Edinburgh, and wooden Highlanders mounting guard at the doors of snuff-shops in London.

Zero. And is that all? Well, another.

Valentine. (*Reads.*) "John Ketts, Irongate, to Simon Quick, toyman, Covent Garden. Our advices inform us that the ship will sail next week with your order. One thousand common dolls; with fifty samples, that work their eyes and mouths. With these, two hundred rocking-horses."

Zero. Well?

Valentine. Well?

Zero. And you can't see through this? Listen and learn. The undried snuff is troops preparing for the pretender. The Highlanders in London, a swarm of kilts with the Stuart.

Valentine. And the thousand common dolls, sir?

Zero. Foreign troops.

Valentine. And the dolls with eyes and mouths?

Zero. The officers to command them.

Valentine. And the rocking-horses?

Zero. Cavalry, sir; cavalry, as I'm a statesman.

Valentine. Wonderful! (*Aside.*) Daylight's wasted upon a man who can see so much better in the dark. Eh? (*Taking a letter.*) Surely a woman's hand?

Zero. No doubt. To fan treason into full blaze, always fan with a petticoat. Go on.

Valentine. (*Reading.*) "To Belinda Icebrook."—

Zero. (*Aside.*) Icebrook? At last—at last! Icebrook? From whom?

Valentine. Dorothy—Dorothy—Budd.

Zero. Go on.

Valentine. Sir, it is a woman's letter.

Zero. Sir, treason is of no sex. The axe—and it could speak—could tell you that.

Valentine. And when I am worthy of the headsman's trade, then I may stoop to this.

Zero. A nice chivalry, perhaps: but all too fine for me to see it. (*Reads.*) "This greeting in the name of St. Cupid."

Valentine. St. Cupid! Ha, ha! Since Cupid has so many of his old friends in the Calendar, 'tis right, at last, he's canonised himself. St. Cupid!

Zero. (*Reads.*) "Sweet Belinda, fortune has found her eyes, for at last she has found me. And how? Guess till your hair grow grey, you'll never know."

Valentine. And with such a prospect she'll never try.

Zero. (*Reads.*) "I'm to have a husband in a week—a diamond of a man dropt from the clouds."

Valentine. Only one? Why not a shower?

Zero. (*Reads.*) "He who would pluck a violet, must stoop for it—which means, I'm told, that my lover humbles himself to make me my lady. Will you have any more? Well then, I'm to be grandmother to a duke, to die at fourscore, and be buried in silver gilt and silk velvet."

Valentine. Very handsome to the worms.

Zero. (*Reads.*) "All this, dear Belinda, a gipsy's sold me for sixpence and a battered thimble. These, wonder at, and bless your Dorothy's fortune."

Valentine. And is that all?

Zero. Here's a postscript. (*Reads.*) "I'd nigh forgot my pin-money. Five hundred a-year—my own coach—and mind, an army of footmen. Bravo, St. Cupid!" Well, what's that?

Valentine. That? Why petticoats-in-idleness. Gipsy jargon canted to a silly girl who prattles the folly to her companion.

Zero. Right. There's no treason here.

Valentine. Treason in a pincushion!

Zero. Ha, Val; a vile necessity, this suspicion. I would fain trust all the world.

Valentine. Then why not?

Zero. Why? With such as me, 'tis learning to swim in deep water: fail, and you may have no second trial. But you're right: this letter's gipsy gossip. (*Aside.*) And now to seek the fortune-teller.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Dorothy! I like the name. I marvel where Dorothy dwells?

Zero. (*Aside.*) An army of footmen. No doubt—no—(*Drops the letter*)—Valentine—

Valentine. (*Takes up letter: glancing at it, as he hands it to* ZERO.) "The Lilacs, Kensington."

Zero. (*Rings bell; enter* TRUNDLE; ZERO *returns letters to box.*) Grandmother to a duke! St. Cupid, too. (*Aside.*) St. George, rather. Ha, Val! Who'd grow old when such a fortune's bought for sixpence? Who'd live in brick-and-mortar, with such a golden castle in the clouds? (*Aside to* TRUNDLE.) Send Mr. Hawke to me. Oh, rare—rare St. Cupid!

[*Exit into inner room, followed by* TRUNDLE *who carries the box.*

Valentine. Dorothy—The Lilacs! And now are there half-a-

dozen faces nodding at me like roses from a bush; and which—which is Dorothy's? Blue eyes, with love's simplicity; or subtle, tantalising hazel? A cheek like a carnation, or face of peach-like brown? Tut! some buxom wench agog for blindman's-buff or hunt-the-slipper. Dorothy—The Lilacs! The syllables sound like a story. And her letter! Why do I remember it? I, with no more memory than a fly: and yet my brain, like so much blotting-paper, has drunk up every word. Every word. Dorothy—the Lilacs! I'll see this linnet in her bush. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—"*The Lilacs.*" *A Garden;* DOCTOR BUDD'S *house at back.*

Enter DOCTOR BUDD. (*He has a newspaper.*)

Budd. In three days the holidays end—the boys will be sprinkling back—and no usher! What has become of scholarship that an offer like this remains unanswered? (*Reads.*) "Wanted, an usher. He must know Greek and Latin; and be acquainted with Hebrew, conic sections indispensable. All the better, if skilled in the broad-sword. He may have occasionally to assume the duties of dancing master; and must write a beautiful hand. A knowledge of music—especially the fiddle—a further recommendation. Honorarium, ten pounds per annum; washing not included." Isn't that temptation? Hasn't it the cadence of the Lydian flute—an odorous whiff from the very groves of the Academy? And no answer! Ha, Dorothy disappointed me from the first, or she'd been born a boy. Then she had succeeded her father whilst, like Diocletian, I had abdicated for my flower-beds. Eh? I seem alone as it is. Hallo! where's that wild thing Dolly would hire? Juno—Juno! Yes—she must change that name. As a schoolmaster, I can't have Juno for a maid-of-all-work. Juno!

Enter JUNO.

Juno. Here she is, sir. Here's Juno.

Budd. Juno, you've been here a week. What do you think of us?

Juno. Might be worse—might as well be better.

Budd. I believe you're right.

Juno. Always speaks my mind. It saves trouble; 'cause one hasn't got to hunt for nothin'.

Budd. (*Aside.*) She's rough as a sloe; but I think as natural. Juno, I believe I shall like you; and so I shall change your name for you.

Juno. Change my name! You know you don't mean it; and if you did, not if your skin was burstin' with di'monds.

Budd. What! why, hussy, you—you—(*Aside.*)—Pooh! she pretends not to understand, and isn't natural; but a woman, after all. I mean—

Juno. Never mind: I won't tell nobody. Only, I say, you've seen a cat with a mouse?

Budd. Well?

Juno. Well, then, you've seen fine folks making game o' poor ones; and it isn't right and straight, is it?

Budd. (*Aside.*) She is natural, I believe. Juno, where's my daughter?

Juno. Gone out hours ago with the sojer.

Budd. Soldier! Dorothy's cousin, Ensign Bellefleur. Poor lad! he's still unwell.

Juno. In course. Hasn't he got leave to be sick? Why should he be well afore his time's up? But here he comes, sir, along with the doctor.

Budd. Doctor! Why, it's Dorothy!

Juno. And so it is. Why what a fool I am! If I didn't take your daughter, that beautiful flower, for that young officer's doctor. If you please, ain't I a fool?

Budd. Eh? Well, I'm not so sure of that. Why, they've turned into the school-room.

Juno. Poor things! Just as if they was two scholards come back for the holidays.

Budd. And the holidays will be over—the boys back—and no usher, no usher! [*Exit.*

Juno. If that sojer was wise he'd get well at once; for Miss Dorothy don't mind him a bit. No; she laughs too much to be in love. Quite too full of life for a woman's first care, which is a sweetheart.

Enter SIR VALENTINE *at back.*

Valentine. (*Aside.*) An odd, silent place. Eh, a woman? And silent still. Wonders grow!

Juno. She's more like a bird than—(*Seeing* VALENTINE.) Law! A man!

Valentine. Even so. Now you know the worst.

Juno. (*Aside.*) Just like Miss Dorothy! You found the gate open?

Valentine. Open as woman's heart.

Juno. (*Aside.*) When she always ought to shut it, but never does.

Valentine. And this is The Lilacs?

Juno. (*Aside.*) A Lunnunner by his talk. The Lalocs.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) It's plain I'm at school. There's something for the lesson: something to get your fortune told. You have gipsies here, eh?

Juno. Gipsies? This is a school for young gentlemen that has nothing to do with rogues and vagabones. (*Aside.*) If Queen Bee only heard me! But you want Doctor Budd, and— (*Aside.*) If now it should be?

Valentine. (*Aside.*) She reads me as I were a finger-post.

Juno. I say, you can't be a—a usher?

Valentine. An usher! Why not?

Juno. Why, you don't look as if you'd lived on scholardship; but if you have—

Valentine. If I have?

Juno. Well, hasn't it been proper meat and drink to you!

[*Runs off.*

Valentine. Stay. Off like a minnow! So; my adventure promises. Dorothy! And when I see her, what story shall I—no; I'll even take my inspiration from her eyes. To prepare a part were want of faith in beauty, treason to St. Cupid.

[*Sits at garden table, and takes newspaper.*

Enter DOCTOR BUDD.

Budd. (*Aside.*) An usher that looks like a gentleman?

Valentine. (*Aside, reading paper.*) "Wanted, an usher." Poor devil!

Budd. (*Aside.*) Oh, a perfect gentleman; and no teacher.

Valentine. (*Aside, reading.*) "Greek, Latin, Hebrew, conic sections, broadsword, fiddle and—Ten pounds per annum!"

Budd. (*Aside.*) Comes about a pupil, no doubt.

Valentine. (*Aside, reading.*) "Washing not included!" Quite unnecessary. Such a teacher may wash in the well of truth; for with such a salary he can scarcely have a larger stock of linen.

Budd. (*Aside.*) It must be a pupil.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) When learning's paid at such a price, who wouldn't cultivate a profitable ignorance? (*Seeing* BUDD.) So; I have the honour to address—

Budd. Doctor Budd.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) This Dorothy's father! Well, the blossom grows on a bramble.

Budd. Of the Lilacs. A classic spot, sir. A bit of Attica on the hem of London.

Valentine. Socrates and Plato within a stride of Bond-street. And Minerva, Doctor; does Minerva—

Budd. My daughter, Dorothy Budd, has Greek and to spare for young beginners.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Greek! I see her. She takes snuff and wears green spectacles. Yet, I'll be satisfied. Could I see the house?

Budd. Certainly. The paint is not dry, and here and there —for we're repairing—the plaster wet. Otherwise, the bedrooms—

Valentine. Beds of roses, allowing for the paint, no doubt. (*Aside.*) I will see her. And the kitchen, Doctor?

Budd. The kitchen! you might roast an ox in it.

Valentine. Do you often try the experiment?

Budd. Often. (*Aside.*) Of course, it's a pupil. All our boys have as much again as they can eat, and twice as much as they can waste. This way, sir.

Valentine. For the kitchen is my test of the school-room; nor can the relationship be too intimate between the teacher and the turnspit.

Budd. Very just, sir; this way. (*Aside.*) It must be a pupil. Who knows? Two pupils!

[*Budd bows* VALENTINE *off towards the house.*

Enter DOROTHY *followed by* BELLEFLEUR.

Dorothy. Another step, and I'll run to my room; and lock, bolt, and bar my door.

Bellefleur. And then I'll follow, and plead through the keyhole. Now, Dorothy—

Dorothy. And the day so hot, and you so delicate! Your walk must have tired you. Now, there's a good boy, go and sleep.

Bellefleur. Three days, Dorothy: three days, and then—

Dorothy. And then, your leave expires—the holidays end—and the house will be comfortable hum-drum again.

Bellefleur. And you have no ambition?

Dorothy. Oh, full as an egg—an eagle's egg.

Bellefleur. Would I could think it!

Dorothy. Well, it isn't your fault, but—

Bellefleur. Yes?

Dorothy. You don't know my dreams.

Bellefleur. Oh, visions of the Sleeping Beauty.

Dorothy. And she — yes, she awoke, to marry a prince. Well, that will do.

Bellefleur. Dorothy, there are times when fortune gives with open hands. Times, when the discreetly bold, and truly loyal — I said truly loyal.

Dorothy. I heard you. But, my dear cousin, you talk of fortune with a death's-head look; and speak of loyalty as if loyalty were a secret to go no further.

Bellefleur. You can keep a secret?

Dorothy. Can you?

Bellefleur. Yes.

Dorothy. Then do keep it.

Bellefleur. No: you must know it.

Dorothy. Must! Then I give you warning. What you must pour in at my ears, must run out at my mouth. Keep a secret! Ask me to keep a jack-o-lantern.

Bellefleur. But cousin Dorothy—

Dorothy. But cousin George; you've been so long in France—in scheming, snaring France—you think all this beautiful world a cobweb, and all the people in it, flies and spiders.

Bellefleur. And if such I've found the world?

Dorothy. Ha, George, we often make the world we find. Webs and flies! What, with a blue roof like that above us, and a soaring song of daily happiness?

Bellefleur. A soaring song! You, a house-bird, for cottage eaves?

Dorothy. A house-bird? I'm content. They don't snare swallows. Let me but twitter round my nest of clay, and sing who will in a cage of gold. But, hark you, George—hush! my father: a stranger, too.

Bellefleur. Here we escape them. Come, cousin: nay, your lips were set for pearls and diamonds, and I'll not lose the promised treasure.

Dorothy. Well, good counsel is a gem. But, George, I fear me you'll never carry the jewel in your ears. [*They retire.*

Enter SIR VALENTINE *and* DOCTOR BUDD.

Budd. I knew, sir, you must like the house.

Valentine. The house is a temple. (*Aside.*) Still no Dorothy.

Budd. And the garden—

Valentine. The garden is Paradise. (*Aside.*) But where is the woman?

Budd. Greatly honoured by the condescension of your approval. (*Aside.*) I wish he'd speak. Of your approval.

Valentine. Plainly, the house seems habitable: the garden a very satisfactory green, and—by the way, what sort of air have you? Dry?

Budd. (*Aside.*) I wonder how he likes it?

Valentine. Dry, I hope?

Budd. Now, that is strange. Though all other stock flourishes wondrously, we are here so dry, ducks won't live with us.

Valentine. No ducks? (*Aside.*) And no petticoats?

Budd. (*Aside.*) He must come to business now.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) What next? For I will see her. House, grounds, air—good; very good. And now—now—why, no,—you hav'n't a rookery?

Budd. Well, in the matter of rooks, opinions differ. To some folks rooks are a plague—to some a pleasure.

Valentine. I pity their taste.

Budd. (*Aside*). Hm! Which taste?

Valentine. Fine fellows, rooks! I like 'em: they suffer an undeserved bad name, yet never do the less good for the scandal. To confound evil tongues, we might take a lesson even of the rooks.

Budd. And luckily, our rooks are of the finest. Sir, you have studied the youthful mind. And, perhaps, I may now ask—

DOROTHY *appears, followed by* BELLEFLEUR.

Valentine. Who's that?

Budd. That? (*Beckons her to him. Formally introducing her.*) My daughter, sir; Miss Dorothy Budd.

[*She curtsies ceremoniously;* BUDD *passes her to* BELLEFLEUR, *who leads her off.*

Valentine. (*Aside.*) By St. Cupid, she might be Cupid's mother!

Budd. (*Aside.*) I don't like these pauses. Sir, may I now enquire—

Valentine. Certainly. (*Aside.*) Dorothy's fortune! 'Twould be sport for a king—and a king of good fellows to boot—to help to make it!

Budd. Sir, I await your commands.

Valentine. Very good—wait. (*Aside.*) What a look of innocence! Tut! Nature's so good to women, and makes innocent looks so very easy.

Budd. Sir—I—in fact, my time is valuable.

Valentine. I am delighted to hear it. To the true teacher, time's hour-glass should still run gold dust.

Budd. (*Aside.*) That's handsome. In which case, sir, in—

DOROTHY *runs in.*

Dorothy. Father, you are wanted within.

Budd. Dear me! Who now?

Dorothy. A gentleman—that is—

Valentine. (*Aside.*) And when she speaks, a dove. A fireside dove!

Budd. Does he look like an usher?

Valentine. Who?

Budd. I expect an usher, and sir—

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Usher! The newspaper! That's it. Yes: I was sent here to make Dorothy's fortune, and destiny, thou shalt be obeyed! Doctor Budd—

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) What can he want? He's very handsome.

Valentine. You have shown me your house—I like it. The school-room lofty—the kitchen capable of good things. A trim garden, and the air, the very climate for a system delicate and susceptible.

Budd. Dolly, tell the usher to wait.

Dorothy. He'll wait. (*Aside.*) And so will I.

Budd. You approve of us?

Valentine. Profoundly. Therefore, as I am first upon the ground, you will doubtless first consider my claims.

Budd. Your claim, sir?

Valentine. Examine me; I can make 'em good. (*Takes news-*

paper from table—bows, presenting it to BUDD.) Greek, Latin, Hebrew, broadsword, music,—

Budd. And that is all you—

Valentine. Oh, I've not done. Conic sections and—washing not included.

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) An usher! Poor fellow!

Budd. (*Aside.*) An usher! Impudent puppy! Hark you! Where have you been before? Come: at whose school?

Valentine. Adversity's.

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Poor soul! He is very handsome.

Budd. Adversity! Well, she must have given a good salary by your coat. Why did you leave her?

Valentine. (*Aside to* BUDD.) My coat, sir! A scholar may confide in a scholar: this coat is not paid for.

Budd. Really?

Valentine. (*Aside to him.*) Nothing is paid for. I stand before you a living monument of human credibility.

Budd. And so you run into debt, and—

Valentine. To the poor, debt is made the homage to the world. Who believes in rags? Now, fine clothes are the very blossoms of the tree of knowledge.

Budd. (*Aside.*) There's something in this young man.

Dorothy. (*Aside to* BUDD.) Shall I see the other person; and if he be an usher, say you are suited?

Budd. (*Aside to her.*) But I'm not suited.

Dorothy. (*Aside to him.*) He's first, you know; and I don't think you could do better.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) They talk of me. Her face glows—her eyes kindle. Ten pounds a year! I'll take half the money.

Budd. (*Aside to her.*) But his assurance! Was ever usher so impudent?

Dorothy. (*Aside to him.*) Aye; but was ever usher so well dressed?

Budd. (*Aside.*) Hm! He'd do us credit—throw a bloom upon The Lilacs!

Valentine. And when, sir, do the holidays end?

Dorothy. In three days.

Valentine. (*To* BUDD.) In three days, then, I'll send my box: (*Aside to him*) my bundle.

Budd. Oh! then you really like the house?

Valentine. I like the house.

Budd. And by-and-by, perhaps, you'll like me?

Valentine. Sir, I make no desperate promises, but I'll do my best.

Dorothy. (*Aside to* BUDD.) Could any one do better?

Valentine. (*Aside.*) So: I'll change my note. But we needn't close to-day.

Budd. Certainly not.

Valentine. I'll call to-morrow —or next day—or next week.

Budd. Very good. (*Aside to her.*) Eh! Dorothy? next week?

Dorothy. (*Aside to him.*) Oh, sir, I'll not advise. You sha'n't blame me.

Valentine. And then the other gentleman may have stronger claims.

Budd. Sir, you have a fine sense of justice; he may. Perhaps, however, you'll wait a little?

Valentine. No; on second thoughts—no. I withdraw.

Budd. Stay, I beg—I insist. (*Aside.*) He's high-spirited and—and none the worse for that. Dorothy, talk to the gentleman for five minutes—only five minutes. [*Exit.*

Valentine. (*After a pause.*) Talk to the gentleman. Surely Miss Budd is an obedient child?

Dorothy. No, she isn't. Unless when obedience has its own reward. But I'll be dutiful. What shall I talk about?

Valentine. I'll give you a subject.

Dorothy. A pretty one, I hope?

Valentine. Beautiful and good. Yourself.

Dorothy. Oh, your servant. Myself! A subject I'm a weary of.

Valentine. Why not part with it?

Dorothy. I'm too merciful, and hate no one well enough to trouble with it. No—now I think of it, I'll even talk of you.

Valentine. With all my heart. Tell me my fortune.

Dorothy. Your fortune? That's in the stars.

Valentine. Why that I see—What is it?

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) What shall it be?

Valentine. Nay, take my hand.

Dorothy. It doesn't need. Like fortune's self, I'd tell your fortune blindfold.

Valentine. Well, pronounce.

Dorothy. And now, I dare not. Your fortune!—'tis too full of folly; too full of all that's wild, and—

Valentine. Wild! Only see me for one winter at the fireside:

that's my place. No hotbed for the virtues like the chimney-corner.

Dorothy. You in the chimney-corner! An out-door plant, I fear.

Valentine. You'll judge me otherwise. I could prophesy! Ere Christmas comes, ere holly sprigs are cut, and the little loves, like bees in blossoms, murmur in the misletoe,—

Dorothy. Well, go on with the prediction.

Valentine. Not now. Having got to the misletoe—

Dorothy. You'll never stop?

Valentine. Yes—'tis safest. (*Aside.*) I half repent this frolic. Too wise for sport—too fair for falsehood. And yet her words weave a net about me, and her eye looks fascination.

Dorothy. How my father stays. (*Aside.*) What's the matter with me? But now, a butterfly—and now, a snail.

Valentine. Your father! Doubtless won by the merits of the other usher. (*Aside.*) That's it; and so to retreat. Yes—'twas not to be. Farewell, chimney-corner—farewell, misletoe. You'll say farewell?

Dorothy. Oh, you yield the ground so cheerily, I can't refuse.

Valentine. (*Taking her hand.*) Farewell, fair lady. (*Aside.*) Am I a coxcomb, or did she really sigh, and did the blood beat in her fingers? I am gone, madam; and—(*looking off*)—Eh, is this the other usher?

Dorothy. Oh, no! He's nothing—that is, nobody but my cousin.

Valentine. Faith, that's something to begin with. (*Aside.*) I won't go. He is here. So—a comely cousin. [*They retire.*

Enter BELLEFLEUR.

Bellefleur. Where have I seen him? In France—no; not France. But we have met—his face comes to me like an old story. (*Seeing them.*) Dorothy, and—and—(*significantly to her*) —Who?

Dorothy. The gentleman is—is—

Valentine. A gentleman; that may suffice.

Bellefleur. Gentleman is a wide word; oft strained to cover mixed conditions—

Valentine. (*Aside.*) So! This sparkles of jealousy. I'll stir the fire. Sir, you are oracular. Has Apollo quitted Delphi?

Bellefleur. A word convenient when no name's inherited, or when a name is lost. And, sir—

Enter DOCTOR BUDD *at back.* CHECKER *lounges on, looking about him.*

Budd. George, what's this? High words, and hot looks?

Valentine. A little argument, sir; the subject—gentleman. I am sure that Ensign Bellefleur and myself accord in the same definition.

Bellefleur. (*Aside to* VALENTINE.) I understand you. Very good.

Checker. (*Aside.*) Yes—Ensign Bellefleur. I knew 'twas he.

Budd. I should hope so.

Checker. (*Coming down.*) Ho! ho! No doubt—no doubt.

Bellefleur. (*Aside; seeing* CHECKER.) Here still! Yes; *'twas* in France.

Checker. Ensign Bellefleur—and—

Bellefleur. (*Aside.*) Familiar hound!

Budd. (*Pointing to* VALENTINE.) My usher!

Bellefleur. Usher! Pah! [*Exit.*

Checker. (*Aside.*) Usher! Hm! A gay and glossy usher.

Budd. My usher. (*Aside to* VALENTINE.) Say no more; but to-morrow bring your bundle. In a word, you're engaged.

Valentine. (*Aside to* DOROTHY.) I'm engaged.

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Engaged!

Budd. (*To* CHECKER.) And, as you admire the house, I may hope for——

Checker. Oh, for all my boys. (*Aside.*) For all I have. Still, I must first bring my wife.

Budd. Their honoured mother? Certainly.

Checker. (*Aside.*) But I must first get her. And, no doubt, you'll have our olive branches: every twig—every twig.

Budd. In three days school begins.

Checker. I shall be here then. (*Aside.*) Be sure of it. But now, I must away. (*Aside.*) For Mr. Zero waits me. And that's your usher?

Budd. My usher.

Checker. Does honour to the house. Seldom see a school-book in such excellent binding. This way out?

Budd. This way, sir. (*To* VALENTINE—Follow me.) This way, sir. [*Exit* BUDD *showing out* CHECKER.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) His boys! He has scarcely the paternal look. And that young soldier! A mist seems rising about me. But

here's a face that breaks and brightens it. (*To* DOROTHY.) Well, I'm of the household: your humble usher.

Dorothy. Yes—engaged.

Valentine. Look: yon holly shoots the higher at the word. What a merry Christmas we will have!

Dorothy. You promise it?

Valentine. Promise! I swear it!

Dorothy. Hardly?

Valentine. Yes: I swear it by my patron saint.

Dorothy. And who is he?

Valentine. Guess.

Dorothy. St. Crispin?

Valentine. No; St. Cupid! [*Runs off.*

Dorothy. St.—gone! St. Cupid! That's strange. He's very handsome. How noble—frank—his look. St.—how very strange! St. Cupid!

[*Seats herself on garden-chair; lapses into thought.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE—*An Apartment opening upon Garden Grounds in* DOCTOR BUDD'S *House.*

Enter DOROTHY.

Dorothy. "You'll be my lady," said the gipsy. What folly! and yet, how folly follows us to sleep! My head still beats with last night's dream.

(*Enter* JUNO *with letter.*)

—Ha, a letter! From Belinda?

Juno. I know'd you'd looked for it for some time, and didn't I give it the postman for not bringing it afore!

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Not from her! What's here? (*Reads.*) "Danger is within your doors: treason wears a mask: but caution, confidence, and—for your sake—the traitor may be saved." No name! For my sake!

Juno. (*Aside.*) Doesn't seem the right letter after all. Why didn't the fellar keep it back?

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) That gipsy! She warned me of a secret foe. Why, what a child am I! The jargon of her trade. Still she spoke of a stranger, and—there again? A secret enemy—a journey to go—a dark stranger, and—tut! the common stock of the craft.

Juno. (*Aside.*) Now what's in that letter that's put such a cloud in her face?

Dorothy. Juno, you recollect that gipsy woman?

Juno. What! old Queen Bee, mum?

Dorothy. Queen Bee! Is that her name?

Juno. Queen Bee, mum. Not that she's Queen of the Gipsies, mum. Oh, no; she give herself the name of Queen Bee, and says she'd only like to look in the eyes of he or she who'd take it from her.

Dorothy. Juno, you seem to know this gipsy's history?

Juno. Why, mum, she's an old 'oman, mum; and I've heerd when women get old, mum, they will sometimes talk; and so when she told me my fortin, she told me all her own, mum.

Dorothy. Is't likely she'll come again?

Juno. After the wittles she had, no doubt on't. She's too good a bee not to know where to settle.

Dorothy. If she should come—hush! my father.

Juno. I know, mum: the summer-house—the evening-star—and not a soul to listen. [*Runs off.*

Dorothy. I could laugh at myself, and yet—I mayn't deny it—the woman's told some truth. And this strange letter!

Enter BUDD.

Budd. What, Dorothy! Dull, my darling? I'm glad of it, I am; for I've news that will brighten even that face. I have.

Dorothy. What is it? Tell me. For just now I could bask in good news, like a kitten in the sun.

Budd. You see, Doll, it didn't please fate to make you a boy.

Dorothy. True, sir; but I hope time and habit have reconciled me to my condition.

Budd. Otherwise, you might have taken a wife: now, you must have a husband.

Dorothy. Ha, sir; I feel what a grievous loss I undergo by the difference.

Budd. And my news is—a husband has bid for you.

Dorothy. Oh, my best curtsey for the compliment!

Budd. That's right. As I used to tell your dear mother, a woman can't be too grateful.

Dorothy. Well, father, and who is the happy man I am to bless?

Budd. Who? Why your cousin. Yes; George has spoken.

Dorothy. Has he? Then let him for ever after hold his peace.

Budd. Tut! You must already love him as a distant relation.

Dorothy. Oh yes! but then it's the distance that makes the love.

Budd. But his prospects! Hear him talk: he may be general, field-marshal.

Dorothy. I care not for laurels. No; hawthorn and daisies for me. And in a word—oh see, father; see—the usher.

Budd. And so it is. And in a soberer suit—that's well. He looks a scholar, eh?

Dorothy. Oh, he looks—(*Aside.*) Everything!

Budd. Go in, Dolly; for I must speak with him; and for George—

Dorothy. Yes, father, I'll leave you. (*Aside.*) For I feel my heart is burning in my face, and so I would not he should see it. [*Exit.*

Enter VALENTINE, *plainly drest. He bows deferentially.*

Budd. Oh, you're come! Brought your luggage?

Valentine. Doctor, the smallest of boxes will be here anon.

Budd. For we must prepare for the boys. Sums to set—copies to write, and—by the bye, what's your name?

Valentine. My name, Doctor? Valentine. (*Aside.*) That's half the truth: and half the truth's a good instalment.

Budd. Pray, what made you an usher?

Valentine. Ambition!

Budd. What?

Valentine. Call it devotion then. Oh, sir, is it not a task in the boy that is to form the man that shall be? The hero—statesman—bishop—as the boy may be?

Budd. It *is* a task.

Valentine. To earn the blessings of generations to come—(*Aside*)—and ten pounds per annum of the generation that is?

Budd. (*Aside.*) Quite an enthusiast!

Valentine. For when the world rejoices in its greatest men, owns it not perforce the debt it owes their teachers?

Budd. No doubt of it.

Valentine. And thus, entrusted with your smallest boys, be it my ambition to rear them into Titans; myself meanwhile calmly crediting the future.

Budd. Beautiful! (*Aside.*) How he'll take the rough work off my hands! A noble zeal! Usher! You shall be master; yes, and just keeping the name, I'll do nothing but admire you.

Valentine. Oh, Doctor!

Budd. Admire you! Yet a word: that young man, Ensign Bellefleur, he's my sister's son—

Valentine. (*Aside.*) And, I find, a busy traitor.

Budd. A hot soldier, with gunpowder in his blood.

Valentine. Sir, I respect gunpowder, wherever it may be.

Budd. Years since, my sister went to France—George was born there. This is a secret—but he's to marry Dorothy. As I say, his head's hot.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) He'll be lucky if it isn't colder.

Budd. But set in the right place.

Valentine. No doubt, sir. (*Aside.*) May it remain there!

Budd. I must leave you now. They'll show you your room. Have you brought your fiddle and broadsword and—though you'll

find 'em here. There, by the way, is a fiddle of mine would make a dying bear dance. As for George, you'll soon know one another. Hot, hot, as I say; but a fine fellow—with a fine prospect. [*Exit.*

Valentine. Very—the scaffold and the block. And marry Dorothy! What's that to me? Yet what has drawn me hither? If I can save his head! Hm! To wink at treason is to risk my own.

QUEEN BEE *looks in at the door.*

Queen Bee. Give the poor gipsy woman a ha'penny, my sir.

Valentine. Eh? Why who are you?

Queen Bee. Queen Bee, my sir, and may you never want it. A ha'penny, my sir, for a bit of bread.

Valentine. A bit of bread? Come, that's not much.

Queen Bee. No, my sir. Butter and cheese is in your own nobleman's disposition, my sir. A ha'penny for poor Queen Bee.

Valentine. A Queen Bee, and beg? Why I thought the working bees provided for her majesty.

Queen Bee. Ha, my sir; real bees is sensible things. Whereas, I'm obligated myself to make my own honey, my sir; and wery hard work it is.

Valentine. Come, here's—(*Puts his hand into his pocket; pauses.*)

Queen Bee. Never baulk a noble mind, my sir. Pull your hand out, if it's a guinea. Do, my sir, and I'll tell you the church where I shall see you marry the lady that—

Valentine. The church? Do gipsies go there?

Queen Bee. Why, my sir, there's a saying that the gipsies' church was built of bacon—

Valentine. Bacon? A fat church!

Queen Bee. And one day the dogs eat it. But, my sir, there's a spark as is worth any di'mond in your eye, that says there's a lady that's perdicted by the stars to make your lawful tea and toast.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Doubtless, to this hag Dorothy owes her fortune. Queen Bee.

Queen Bee. That's my name, my sir: and what it costs me to keep it up—put your hand in your pocket, my sir—the Bank o' England never knows.

Valentine. You know this house?

Queen Bee. Not so much as the weathercock on the top of it, my sir. (*Aside.*) Oh, no!

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Valentine. Nay, you've told a fortune here? Have given a husband, riches—

Queen Bee. For wives, babbies, and husbands, I have 'em bran new from the stars, spick and span; while the money I gives away, which always comes, nobody can reckon. (*Curtseys.*) A sixpence for the poor gipsy?

Valentine. First, let me know your dealings. The young lady of this house—

Queen Bee. And is there a young lady?

Valentine. Queen Bee, do you know Bridewell?

Queen Bee. Not a morsel. Any acquaintance of your honour's?

Valentine. Oakum, bread and water?

Queen Bee. Bread and water I have heerd on; but oakum is a stranger.

Valentine. Trust me, you shall be closely known. Confess your traffic, or hear me prophesy your fortune.

Queen Bee. You! Well, the stars is come to summut. There's my hand; and do your worst. What do you see in it?

Valentine. Broken hedges—plundered linen—and many a stolen goose.

Queen Bee. As far as a goose goes, I says nothing. You know best.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) The harridan. That for the past. Now for the future. First, there's the Bridewell beadle and a sound whipping. (*She closes her hand.*) Open your hand: I have only begun.

Queen Bee. You're werry kind, my sir: but the beginning is so uncommon bad, I don't see what's to better it.

Valentine. Courage: we are whipped to begin with, but that's a trifle.

Queen Bee. In your case, I'm sure I should feel it so.

Valentine. We then beat oakum for a month.

Queen Bee. Only a month?

Valentine. Here the stars are somewhat misty: it may be two months, and in the end we are whipped again.

Queen Bee. Well, the end's so like the beginning, it leaves nothin' to choose.

Valentine. Still, there's a bright streak of oakum.

Queen Bee. To come atween the cuts. And when, my sir, is this worser than murder to happen?

Valentine. Eh?

Queen Bee. When is the suffering soul to bite the dust afore the beadle?

Valentine. When? Why—

Queen Bee. Ha! You boggle at the stars, that only winks and laughs at you. Now, I'll tell you—for I know the wery minute—when Queen Bee will fall into the den of the lions.

Valentine. When?

Queen Bee. When they catches her.

[QUEEN BEE *is about to run off.* VALENTINE *seizes her.*

Valentine. And she is caught!

Queen Bee. Let me go—let me go, or—

JUNO *runs on.*

Juno. What's the matter? What do you want?

Valentine. Want! This hag has—

Juno. (*Aside to him, mysteriously.*) Hush! Don't—she's a witch.

Valentine. Witch! A harridan that—

Juno. (*Aside to him.*) I say, if you're the new husher, jest for your master's sake be quiet; hold your tongue.

Valentine. Hold my tongue!

Juno. (*Aside to him.*) Or she'll ruin the school. I tell you, she's a witch; and she's only to lift up her little finger to bring the measles down upon us from one end to t'other.

Valentine. Ha! ha!

Juno. You may laugh—she can do anything. A dairyman set his dog at her; and from that time to this, that dairyman's milk has been three parts water.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Stay. I may turn her witchcraft to a merciful use. Set her on that desperate boy. A piece of money, a few words—dark to the gipsy, but plain as death-warrant to the youth himself—and so insure his sudden flight, and hold myself aloof. Queen Bee?

Queen Bee. Well, my sir.

Valentine. (*Aside to her.*) A word with you!

Queen Bee. Your words, my sir? I don't like the taste on 'em.

Valentine. Look here!

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) A bit of gold, as I'm Queen of the Bees!

Valentine. (*Aside to her.*) Only a word. Come. I would learn of the stars.

Queen Bee. (*Aside to him.*) Stars, my sir. I can see by your sweet face, you was born to have the pick and choose on 'em.

[*Exit* VALENTINE *at door, followed by* QUEEN BEE.

Juno. Wants his fortin' told, I'm bound. And he's a scholard!

I suppose it's only in a different way, and a scholard's as great a fool as other people.

Enter DOROTHY.

Dorothy. Juno, where is—

Juno. He's with Queen Bee, miss.

Dorothy. He? Who?

Juno. The husher.

Dorothy. The gipsy here, and—but how knew you I asked for the usher?

Juno. Can't tell, miss. But don't you sometimes feel your thoughts jump at a thing, for all the world like any tiger? The husher's with Queen Bee, Miss. Who knows what she may promise him? They may all be this minute twinkling in the stars above us.

Dorothy. All—what?

Juno. What? Why, a house, a wife, a school, and forty little boys. [*Exit.*

Dorothy. A wife—a school! But if the gipsy oracle speak truth, my fortune's wide apart from that. That he too should consult the sibyl! Oh, a mere frolic! Yet have we sympathy in sport. Stay, I am to be my lady. If so, how can such as he—fie upon this weakness! Would I rather now that my fortune were a fiction, and his—as spoken by that foolish girl—a truth? Why this is folly! And yet the folly casts a shadow on me.

Queen Bee. (*Looking in at door.*) Give the poor gipsy a bit of bread.

Dorothy. Bread, and honey to sweeten it! Queen Bee—

Queen Bee. Yes, my rose-upon-the-bush.

Dorothy. What do you here to-day?

Queen Bee. Do! Do my living, my humming-bird. And, my lily-of-the-walley, I only wish I'd somebody to do it for me.

Dorothy. You've had your hand crossed, and in this house?

Queen Bee. Eh? You'd coax the poor old Queen. What a woice you have! And when you was made a 'oman, what a mermaid was spiled!

Dorothy. Come, you have told me my fortune, and—

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) And any how, I must stick to that. I have; and wasn't it a beauty?

Dorothy. I can't wish a better. But you've told another to-day. Now, you have?

Queen Bee. No.

Dorothy. You have; and—why how you wear your kerchief, with never a pin! There, now; it's real gold.

[DOROTHY *fastens* QUEEN BEE'S *kerchief with a pin, or brooch, from her own dress.*

Queen Bee. And there's nothing like gold to keep the cold out. Well! if you wouldn't coax a eagle on the wing!

Dorothy. That young gentleman; I mean the usher, the—

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) How her eyes strikes fire! That husher! I'll turn what he told me to tell the sojer upon his own self; for she must be my lady, that is, for a little bit. (*Mysteriously.*) The husher! Ha!

Dorothy. What's the matter?

Queen Bee. It's in the stars, and you're to be a lady: and—it won't be my fault if it's otherways—for a hundred years and over, you'll be grandmother to dukes and duchesses.

Dorothy. Nay never mind me, but—

Queen Bee. But the husher! Oh, my chicken, don't be afeard; but don't be overbould. Well; I have seen a hand this day, in this house!

Dorothy. Yes!

Queen Bee. A hand black with bad luck, as any chimbley-sweeper's.

Dorothy. Indeed! Ha! ha! Well? go on.

Queen Bee. It's nothin' to you, but don't laugh; for that hand will be wringing with tears.

Dorothy. With tears!

Queen Bee. Not a line that's in it that doesn't run to ruin. There—that's enough.

Dorothy. No; I must know more—ha! ha!—all. Quick! he's crossing the lawn.

Queen Bee. He'll find me here!

Dorothy. No, by that door (*pointing to door at side*), into the other walk. Now, tell me all, and—

Queen Bee. Here it is then—(*Aside*)—if I can remember it. But don't you be afeard acause—

Dorothy. Never heed me, but speak.

Queen Bee. Here, then, it is in short, that young man's fortin'. (*Aside.*) Let me see. Yes—that's it. (*Solemnly.*) These are topsy-turvy times; folks tosses for royal crowns—and some heads loses!

Dorothy. Royal crowns! Go on.

Queen Bee. Hide-and-seek's a bad game,—

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Ha! that letter! Hide-and seek?

Queen Bee. But found out's worser.

Dorothy. Found out!

Queen Bee. It's a short cut to Tower-Hill, but—

Dorothy. Tower-Hill?

Queen Bee. But a shorter when you get there. That's it! Shorter when you get there. [*Exit by door at side.*

Dorothy. I am cold at heart—terrified; and that, despite my reason; for ere now she has told some truth—some truth. That letter, too! Is it possible? Can he seek refuge here? Disguised! And if discovered, his life—oh, this is folly: I will conquer it—laugh at myself,—laugh at the idle picture that—ha! ha! ha!

Enter VALENTINE.

Valentine. I'm glad to find you merry. No music like the laughter of young and happy hearts.

Dorothy. Oh, I am ever merry—ever. I thank my stars for't.

Valentine. And you believe in the stars?

Dorothy. Do not you?

Valentine. Yes; I believe in their bright side; when they twinkle promises of love and beauty.

Dorothy. And when they frown with danger—death?

Valentine. Then I whistle, and so ends my faith. Dorothy, your pardon; but there is that within your face that makes me bold in friendship. Some sudden care?

Dorothy. No—that is—Well, I will confess it. I have faith in the stars.

Valentine. And their aspect threatens you?

Dorothy. No, not me.

Valentine. Some one dear to you?

Dorothy. Oh no.

Valentine. Oh yes! a brother, perhaps?

Dorothy. I have none.

Valentine. A lover, then?

Dorothy. I have—none.

Valentine. Oh, truth will out. Let the tongue deny it, and how prettily it flies to the cheek! Happy lover; to live a moment there in such a blush!

Dorothy. Indeed, no. My fears have no such cause! But these are times of danger; when even innocence may be in peril.

Valentine. Nay, innocence is pretty safe; but there'll be little mercy for what success calls treason.

Dorothy. I fear not.

Valentine. You fear it?

Dorothy. I mean, had I a friend weak and rash enough to mix in these designs,—

Valentine. Well?

Dorothy. I would supplicate, implore him from his purpose.

Valentine. And so petitioned, could he be obdurate? The prayer of Dorothy must win an erring subject back to loyalty and Hanover.

Dorothy. Oh, if I thought so—

Valentine. Well, think you think so.

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) All's plain: his darkened look—his words so cautious, cold!

Valentine. Think, for thought's sake, you have a friend perilled by treason—

Dorothy. A friend, who is not what he seems?

Valentine. Certainly; not what he seems.

Dorothy. And if discovered, doomed—

Valentine. To death—assured death. The traitor's ghastly fate —Dorothy, you're pale and—why, Dorothy, one would almost think that traitors thick as sparrows harboured here—here in The Lilacs. But if a friend were really in such jeopardy, what would you risk to save him?

Dorothy. Risk? I'd give my life—and were it to give again, again my life!

Valentine. Brave Dorothy!

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) He will not seem to understand me. Yet he shall not perish—despite himself, I'll save him!

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Eh? Our traitor cousin with the schoolmaster crosses the garden. And now what I was about to say, I know it not—

Dorothy. Nay, but think—

Valentine. (*Taking violin from the table.*) I sometimes think to music. (*Tuning violin.*) May I ask a favour?

Dorothy. What is it?

Valentine. Merely to walk a minuet? My engagement with your father exacts music and dancing. I'm somewhat out of practice, and would not be found shortcoming. Will you oblige me?

Dorothy. Impossible! (*Aside.*) George! my father! I have forgotten, I—

Valentine. And so I fear have I. But a few notes, and 'tis wonderful how one's brain is schooled, and one's feet slide into the measure. (*Begins to play Minuet de la Cour.*) That's it, I think. (*Aside to her.*) Here's company. They must not find us grave. Dance.

Dorothy. Indeed, I—

Valentine. (*Aside to her.*) Dance; in affairs of state much may turn upon a minuet. (VALENTINE *plays and both begin the minuet.*) That's it—excellent.

DOCTOR BUDD *is about to enter. Pauses at door.*

Budd. (*Talks aside through dancing.*) How beautiful! What grace—what harmony; and for ten pounds per annum! George, in his sulks, has turned away; all the better, perhaps. Beautiful—admirable! (*Aloud, applauding.*) Bravo! bravo! Capital—delightful!

Valentine. Doctor Budd!

Dorothy. Father!

Budd. Charming. Costly as I thought that fiddle, you've put fifty guineas more into it. What a tone you have; a tone of gold; of virgin gold. (*Aside.*) And for ten pounds per annum.

Valentine. (*Fingering violin.*) 'Tisn't bad.

Budd. Bad! You play with the bow of Cupid on the heart-strings of the dying swan.

Valentine. My dear sir,—

Budd. You do; doesn't he, Doll? (*Aside.*) And for ten pounds per annum! Such a treasure! He's worthy of her; she won't have George, and—yes, I'll do it, and now: this very minute. (*Aloud.*) Dolly, you're wanted in the pantry. (*Aside to her.*) Leave us; I've something to say.

Dorothy. (*Aside to him.*) Something—

Budd. Something to the usher. Something that we are all concerned in.

Dorothy. May I ask—

Budd. May you ask? As I used to say to your dear mother—no, you mayn't. Why, what are you scared at?

Dorothy. Nothing.

Budd. Do you think I'm blind? Do you suppose I can't see through a man's coat clean into the centre of his heart; and I've discovered—

Dorothy. What?

Budd. There! There's your dear mother again, and I won't reply. Now go.

[QUEEN BEE *opens door at side, motions to* DOROTHY, *then disappears.*

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Queen Bee! she beckons. I am gone, sir. [*Exit.*

Valentine. (*Aside.*) So! our interesting rebel holds apart. Hm! The Doctor; and plainly meditating a piece of ceremony.

Budd. Young man, fortune though blind writes a fine, bold hand.

Valentine. Really, Doctor, I'm sorry to say I don't know her penmanship.

Budd. I do, especially when I see it on the forehead of a fine young fellow. Don't blush.

Valentine. I won't.

Budd. You are set down for a great destiny. You think I little know it, perhaps; but you really are not what you seem.

Valentine. No?

Budd. No! I have found you out.

Valentine. And the discovery, sir—

Budd. Must delight both of us. I watched you in that minuet; you are visibly destined to sit in my chair, and—when I've quite done with 'em—walk in my shoes. Don't reply, but answer. What do you think of my Dorothy?

Valentine. Think of her! I—I have not the audacity to think of so beautiful a subject.

Budd. Then be audacious, and begin to think. Valentine, I have a conscience: and I could not turn in my bed to think I gave you only ten pounds per annum.

Valentine. No, sir? Then make it twenty, and turn to your heart's content.

Budd. Twenty! the school's worth—but I won't tell you now! [BELLEFLEUR *appears at door.*

And what Dorothy would be worth as a wife—

Bellefleur. (*Aside.*) Dorothy! Wife!

Budd. I can't tell you, if I would. Ha! ha! What a pair you looked in that minuet. (BELLEFLEUR *comes down.*) What a—George! (*Aside to* VALENTINE.) Hush! not a word—as I said, he's hot—a little hot. Ha, George; you've missed a treat. The young man draws such a bow. (*To* VALENTINE.) Now just a few bars of the minuet: let him hear—

Bellefleur. Sir, I hate fiddling, and despise fiddlers.

Budd. Hate music? Then, sir, you've ears of leather, and a heart of stone! [CHECKER *appears at door.*

Valentine. Ensign Bellefleur hates minuets; but as a soldier martial music must warm and stir him. Something like this, now. [*Begins to play a Jacobite air.*

Budd. Silence! That's a Jacobite march—and just now, may be treason.

Checker. (*Aside.*) May be, and is. Patience, and I may take the whole family. [*Disappears.*

Valentine. A Jacobite march? I had forgotten. So it is. [*Plays.*

Budd. Hush! These ar'n't times even to fiddle disaffection.

Valentine. What care we who are loyal subjects? (*To* BELLEFLEUR.) Isn't it stirring, sir? I don't know how it is: but the worst cause always gets the best airs. Yes. (*Plays a few notes.*) With such music on the pipes; music filling a glen with a river of sound, one feels treason to be infectious; one sees the gathering of the clans, and one's foot springs from the heather.

Bellefleur. You are eloquent, sir! (*Aside.*) Upon my life, a spy.

Valentine. Not a note that isn't a spell for a hundred Highlanders. They gather and gather; and now they form, and now they march—march.

[*Plays the march; and affecting to be animated by the music, marches to and fro, glancing at* BELLEFLEUR.

Budd. (*Following* VALENTINE.) Silence! Hush! Have done, I say; we may all be fiddled to the Tower: give it me. (*Snatches violin from* VALENTINE.) And now I'll lock it safely up. You draw a beautiful bow, but just now there may be rope in it. [*Exit.*

Bellefleur. Ha! ha! I'm no judge; but I suppose you fiddle well?

Valentine. The merest scraper. And then, I'm out of practice.

Bellefleur. That's a pity. (*Aside.*) A spy; I'll swear it. And he to speak of Dorothy! but I'll be calm—cold.

Valentine. I could play better once.

Bellefleur. No doubt: well, practice may come again. In these times, fiddlers like yourself are sure of hire. What, now, may you get to buy rosin?

Valentine. Oh, enough and to spare. Enough for rosin, and enough for a sword.

Bellefleur. A sword! Aye, as usher—ha! ha! usher—you teach—

Valentine. Manners. Be warned.

Bellefleur. Warned! Impostor!

Valentine. Am I so? How? Ensign Bellefleur may be an authority. Young man, I would serve you.

Bellefleur. Your service! I know it; and in my loyalty—

Valentine. What?

Bellefleur. Loyalty. Why, do you scan me?

Valentine. I look for a blush—it is not there.

Bellefleur. Despicable hireling!

[*Casts his glove in* VALENTINE'S *face.*

Valentine. (*Seizing sword from table.*) Now, sir, to give you a lesson.

[BELLEFLEUR *draws; they exchange a few passes; and, as* BUDD *and* DOROTHY *re-enter,* VALENTINE *disarms* BELLEFLEUR.

Dorothy. George!

Budd. Valentine! What's this?

Valentine. A friendly bout, sir; nothing more. You know, I'm hired to teach the sword—(*To* BELLEFLEUR.) You fence well, sir, very well; a little too hasty, perhaps; be cooler on your guard—(*returning him his sword*)—and Ensign Bellefleur has condescended to receive a lesson.

Budd. And is that all?

Bellefleur. All—(*Aside to* VALENTINE)—for the present. [*Exit.*

Budd. (*Aside*). And for ten pounds per annum! Why, Dolly, you look scared.

Dorothy. I, sir! No, sir! (*Aside.*) The gipsy's spoken plainly: he perishes if—

Budd. Scared and pale! But just like your poor mother. She couldn't bear cold iron though but in play. There, go into the garden, get some air; and Valentine, go walk with her.

Valentine. If Miss Budd will so far honour me,—

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) No time is to be lost.

[*Curtseying, gives him her hand. They exeunt at door into garden.*

Budd. (*Watching them.*) A beautiful couple! He a fine, graceful young fellow! And what a musician! What a swordsman! and —and only ten pounds per annum.

[*Exit slowly as drop falls;* QUEEN BEE *looking from side-door.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*Another view of the Garden Grounds of "The Lilacs." Summer-House at side.*

Enter CHECKER *and* JUNO.

Checker. And all the boys are happy as kings?

Juno. If full bellies is happiness, kings with crowns on couldn't be no happier. But you're very partic'lar?

Checker. My wife is; and when you're the mother of beautiful boys——

Juno. Well, I do hope to better myself some day.

Checker. Ha! I'd wager you have a sweetheart already?

Juno. One!

Checker. He ought to be a handsome fellow, or he won't match.

Juno. But he is—we do; I've taken care of that. (*Aside.*) Leastways, I will.

Checker. Then, here's a crown towards the wedding-dinner.

Juno. (*Aside.*) No harm in being ready with the dinner. Lor! I do wonder if that leg o' mutton's yet in the world?

Checker. Now tell me. That young fellow with the fiddle, he——

Juno. What! the husher?

Checker. Who is he?—where does he come from—what's his name and—

Juno. I say, if you want sich a lot for a crown, I'm afeard you and me can't deal.

Checker. Tut! arn't you servant here, and—

Juno. And does for forty boys. But I only sells the work of my hands, and—when I like—keeps my tongue to myself.

[*Gate bell is rung.*

Checker. (*Aside.*) No doubt that's he. 'Tis his time—the friend I spoke of—he wants to see the grounds and—

Juno. What, has he got boys too?

Checker. The largest of families. (*Aside.*) Every minister has. And Doctor Budd—

Juno. The Doctor's stept into Kensington. [*Exit to gate.*

Checker. All the better. Here's a plot should bring me a knighthood.

(*Enter* MR. SECRETARY ZERO, *shown on by* JUNO.)

You may go now.

Juno. Thank'ee. (*Aside.*) To my eye, they look queerish; but the crown's a good un. [*Exit.*

Zero. And now, Checker, what new news?

Checker. This Doctor Budd's a venomous Jacobite.

Zero. Well?

Checker. And that spark, young Bellefleur—him whom I marked down in Paris, he is here.

Zero. Ha!

Checker. He is called Ensign Bellefleur: gives it out that he has King George's commission, and is away from his regiment—now in country quarters—on sick leave. The traitor's delicate, and Kensington's his native air.

Zero. Go on.

Checker. Then there's another spark—I'm sure a traitor, too. Has a high-born look, but passes for usher. He plays the fiddle and—

Zero. No treason in a fiddle, eh?

Checker. Why, sir, and please you, that depends upon the tune.

Zero. (*Looking off.*) Who comes here?

Checker. Why, sir, that is— [*They retire, talking.*

Enter QUEEN BEE.

Queen Bee. Miss Dorothy thinks me a witch outright. How I've flustered her, and somehow, how I do hate that fiddler. Deary me! Well, I am lemancholy! In that little room where I was hid—I can't bear to think on it—there was silver spoons and silver mugs, and—oh, dear!—there I've left 'em. And to think that I shall die some day and nobody know how I was tempted! Well, it's in the stars: I come into the world honest, and try as I might, I never could help it. [CHECKER *and* ZERO *come down.*

Checker. That's a pity: try again.

Zero. What are you?

Queen Bee. A lone 'oman, my sir, as wouldn't be mislested on the highway. [*Going.*

Checker. Come, you trade with the stars?

Queen Bee. And if I do, the stars is the only lawful goods of us little folks; and do you know why?

Zero. Why?

Queen Bee. Cause they're the only goods the big uns can't take from us. Oh, my sir! To see the sky a twinkling like with millions o' new sixpences—it's a pretty property, for them as has nothing else, isn't it, my sir?

Checker. And you've made the most of it in this house. I say, that's a fine wench, Miss Dorothy.

Queen Bee. Is she? Our sex is no judges of one another.

Zero. No! how's that?

Queen Bee. Can't say, my sir. But I never know'd a 'oman who could lay her hand on her heart, and say she know'd more than one handsome 'oman in all her days.

Checker. Well, the young fellows—what say you of them?

Queen Bee. Which young fellar? 'cause there's two; and when there's two a 'oman's like to be puzzled.

Checker. Well, I mean the—(*Aside to* ZERO.) Here he comes.

Zero. He! (*Aside.*) Impossible! Valentine! (*To* QUEEN BEE.) Who is that young man?

Queen Bee. That? That is ten pounds a-year, and I must say it, werry good-looking for the money.

Zero. No riddles. Who is he?

Queen Bee. Who is he? For further partic'lars, ax the evening star. (QUEEN BEE *affects to read the sky, whilst she endeavours to evade them; but is detained.*) And there she comes out with that knowin' twinkle of her'n; and there's that real gentle'oman the moon as looks like her lawful mother; and by and bye, there'll be the big bear and the little bear which is as good as her brother and sister; together with the two twins and their milk-and-whey, which rises in the head of Satan, saving your presence, which is in the eye of Wenus, which twinkling full on Mars says—

Zero. Says what?

Queen Bee. Says—

Checker. (*Presenting pistol.*) Says what?

Queen Bee. Says werry proudly, no gentleman would pull out a pistol afore a lady, and if he don't take his fire-arms off her, she *will* squeal.

Zero. (*Aside.*) And Val here! Checker doesn't know him—that's well. (*Takes* QUEEN BEE *apart.*) Tell me: that young man's in peril?

Queen Bee. Werry good.

Zero. A plot?

Queen Bee. To be sure.

Zero. Who knows? A plot that may end with—

Queen Bee. A chopper—a block—and Tower Hill.

Zero. Why? How do you know?

Queen Bee. Know! Well, sometimes you might knock me down with a feather, I knows more than I can stand under.

Zero. But there's a knowledge that's dangerous when kept to ourselves.

Queen Bee. But I don't keep it. Bless you, I sells mine werry often faster than I gets it.

Zero. You do?

Queen Bee. Yes: nimble returns and small profits: I've rung the penny on Tower Hill already.

Zero. Dealt with treason, and so put your head in a rope?

Queen Bee. Don't, my sir. The talk of a rope makes me giddy: seems to take me off my legs: a weakness as is run in the family.

Zero. (*Aside.*) They come. This way. (*Aside to* CHECKER.) Silence, and for a while secure her.

Checker. Else she may blow on us. This way, go there. (*Pointing to summer-house.*) There, and hold your tongue.

Queen Bee. What! Well if—

Checker. In, and hold your tongue.

Queen Bee. Well, I'm a weak 'oman; but if I could talk bullets, you'd see if I'd hold my tongue.

[*Threatened by* CHECKER, *she enters the summer-house.* ZERO *and* CHECKER *retire.*

Enter VALENTINE *and* DOROTHY.

Valentine. And so—farewell!

Dorothy. Yes; the frolic's played; the jest—what a merry jest—is out, and so—farewell.

Valentine. But we'll not part here. 'Tis yet some steps to the gate; and when that shuts between us—

Dorothy. You can laugh at leisure. Well, you have played the character to a marvel!

Valentine. Oh! the bribe was so alluring.

Dorothy. Truly?

Valentine. To look upon your beauty; to hear the silver of your voice; to—how now?

Dorothy. For shame!

Valentine. Lady!

Dorothy. I blush—could almost weep; with anger weep—

Valentine. In pity's name, for what?

Dorothy. To think that nature should make such a mask. Well, poor nature! In sooth, you look a gentleman.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) I *will* break from this. But that's where nature plays the counterfeit. I am poor, lady.

Dorothy. Very poor. Base!

Valentine. Madam, I have confessed my indiscretion. I came in jest—have played a part. But the report of your loveliness—the magic of—

Dorothy. Oh, sir, that's a jargon out of season. I know you!

Valentine. Have I not confessed?

Dorothy. Oh, a clean confession! You had heard of us; had seen, or dreamt you'd seen, my shadow once. And, then, that newspaper—it fell like a sunbeam on your desk—your student's desk—in Gray's Inn—Lincoln's Inn—or is it, sir, the Inner Temple—where you study law, hoping some good day to hold the scales?

Valentine. (*Aside.*) With what an edge of scorn she speaks!

Dorothy. And so you'd come and scan us! Pass yourself—an innocent deceit—for usher! And the frolic over, empty your heart—brave heart—confess the trick, ask pardon, make your bow, and back again to your student's loft—still to study law, and—ha! ha!—still to read the newspapers.

Zero. (*Aside.*) A worthy girl: a wholesome scorn.

Valentine. Do not persecute the penitent. I was led here by vanity: I am rebuked to very humbleness.

Dorothy. Begone, sir!

Valentine. At least, your hand!

Dorothy. Touch it not! *Your* touch would blister it! Again I say, begone. Again I say, I know you.

Valentine. What you think your knowledge, speak. What am I?

Dorothy. A spy!

Valentine. No!

Dorothy. Yes! That meanest, poorest, and most abject thing—a hireling spy.

Valentine. Upon my soul—

Dorothy. In mercy, no. Look here! [*Presenting paper.*

Valentine. How?

Dorothy. And not ashamed? Not? Why, no. The ink shall blush before your cheek.

Valentine. So! A copy of the Chevalier's Manifesto. Where was this found?

Dorothy. Where you laid it!

Valentine. Truly? And by whom?

Dorothy. By loyal hands; and so you've lost your pains.

Zero. (*Aside.*) Why this is brave. (*Whispers to* CHECKER.) Dispatch!

[*Exit* CHECKER. QUEEN BEE *is about to creep from summer-house, when* ZERO, *taking out pistol, threatens her back again. She, however, from time to time, now appears at the window listening.*]

Valentine. (*Aside.*) I see his purpose. And this was found by Ensign Bellefleur? He read it you, then asked your judgment of the cause it champions? Was it not so?

Dorothy. Go on.

Valentine. And you denounced the madness, treason, here set forth?

Dorothy. How otherwise?

Valentine. And then your cousin called me spy?

Dorothy. And called not truly?

Valentine. Look at me, lady. Fix your eye on mine. I see a soul of tenderness, of truth. What see you? A trading spy; a human wolf that feeds at scaffolds? Am I this?

Dorothy. (*Having gazed at* VALENTINE.) No! if what seemed an angel said it—no!

Valentine. (*Falls upon his knee, and kisses her hand.*) My thanks and blessing. Yet must your cousin think me hireling still.

Dorothy. Wherefore?

Valentine. Can you ask? Otherwise, I am denounced.

Zero. (*Aside.*) Why this is admirable.

Dorothy. Denounced?

Valentine. As spy, I may be safe in his contempt; as the known rebel he declares my treason, and I am lost.

Dorothy. The known rebel! And you have joined this desperate cause? You have perilled fame and life? Life! Yes; that ghastly picture was no fancied terror, but a threatening truth!

Valentine. (*Aside.*) How my heart grows at her devotion. And he, too, shall be saved.

Dorothy. What's to be done?

Valentine. As yet I may pass freely.

Dorothy. You stir not. I have wronged you in my doubts, and owe you recompence. George may leave the house—

Valentine. He must not—

Dorothy. He shall not. Pledge me your word to stay, and he's secured. Your word?

Valentine. 'Tis given.

Dorothy. A moment—but a moment. [*Exit.*

Valentine. Why what a net I'm caught in! So: and here's our cousin's credentials. I doubt not he has hundreds of copies. This the Chevalier's Manifesto.

Zero. (*Coming down and twitching it from his hand.*) Good.

Valentine. Uncle—and here!

Zero. Nephew—and here!

Valentine. (*Aside.*) He's lost; past help, destroyed.

Queen Bee. (*In summer-house.*) I'll seem to go to sleep: shut my eyes, that I may open my ears.

[*Sits forward, and affects during the following to talk in her sleep.*

Zero. Bravo, Val! Why, now I've hopes of you.

Valentine. Sir!

Zero. Oh, no modesty, or you'll spoil your part.

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) And that 'ud be a pity.

Zero. I've some conceit myself—

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) *Where* did he get it?

Zero. Some conceit of state-craft, yet I couldn't have juggled it better myself. Very good.

Valentine. It wasn't bad. (*Aside.*) What does he mean?

Zero. Capital! To be denounced by the wench as a spy, and then—so earnestly too—to declare yourself in confidence a real conspirator!

Valentine. Then you heard all, sir?

Zero. All: and your deceit was so good, it was better than truth.

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) And that's how pocket-pieces passes in this world! Well, luck's all.

Zero. But, Val, what brought you here?

Valentine. What, sir? Why, the—the state, sir.

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) Oh! honourable: the holy state, o' course.

Valentine. You know you laughed at—at St. Cupid?

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) And when he's in earnest, he's no joke.

Valentine. Now, I thought there was something in the girl's letter—something more than bow and arrows and gipsy-gossip; and so I came, and—and here I am.

Zero. King George must know your zeal.

Valentine. You'd often twitted me with dulness, inactivity; so

I thought I'd hunt this plot out upon my own account. And you, sir—how came you here?

Zero. That letter. I sought these Icebrooks: and when, from the name, I looked for a nest of desperadoes, I found a buxom damsel and a brace of old-maid aunts.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Is this true, now? And they sent you here?

Zero. Not so: I had planted a spy here already.

Valentine. A spy?

Zero. But that lessens not your merit. Ha! ha! He didn't know you, and has reported you as one of the conspirators.

Valentine. As one of them?

Zero. Aye; the other, the manifesto-monger. (*Looks at paper.*) —Good bold writing, this: he's from France, and—I find—an old acquaintance.

Valentine. And he?

Zero. Hangs, of course.

Queen Bee. (*Coming down. Aside.*) No objection.

Valentine. But—

Zero. But! The order's given — that messenger despatched, and—

Queen Bee. (*Affecting to read the skies.*) There is the little bear, and the big 'un, which—

Zero. So: now you may go.

Queen Bee. No, I mayn't. You kept me here agin my will,—and agin yours, I stop.

Zero. Dispute with me! You hag that—

Queen Bee. Sweet words, if you please. You don't know me. Tread upon some worms, and they turns into crocodiles.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Even she may help us. (*Aside to* QUEEN BEE.) Don't go.

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) You're werry kind. I won't.

Zero. Here's a dollar—tramp.

Queen Bee. Couldn't do it under a guinea—and that 'ud be cheap at the money.

Zero. Well, stay, and be otherwise repaid.

Queen Bee. (*Returning towards summer-house*). Who knows? The price may go up.

Zero. (*Pointing off.*) Look, Val: she's here again. In faith, she's pretty.

Valentine. Beautiful, and wise and good!

Zero. Hey day! Val, this is an affair of state, and—

Valentine. Oh, purely of state, and—

Zero. And loyalty?

Valentine. And loyalty. So she must think me still conspirator?

Zero. For a few minutes.

Valentine. And then?

Zero. The farce is played. Why, Val, you're grave!

Valentine. Yes: never so grave. Devotion—innocence and truth!

Zero. Tut! they're well enough in a farce: but we play the play of the real world. Still the girl's a pretty toy—

Valentine. A jewel, sir, to place for life about a brave man's heart!

Zero. Ha! ha! ha! (*Aside.*) Why, hang him, he's in earnest. [*He retires.*

Enter DOROTHY.

Dorothy. All will be well—secure.

Valentine. Why, how is this? You tremble—are pale—and tears are—

Dorothy. In sooth, I have not the courage, that to myself I boasted. I shall be calm when—when—

Valentine. When I am gone?

Dorothy. Yes: if gone in safety.

Valentine. And we may never meet again.

Dorothy. It matters not if you're preserved and—and happy.

Valentine. Happy! Ought I to be so?

Dorothy. Why not?

Valentine. Know you the peril you incur! Saving a traitor's life, your own is forfeit—

Dorothy. My life! I'd cast it from me as I cast this flower! [*Throwing a flower from her.*

Valentine. And on this flower—this opening rose—this truest symbol of a maiden's spotless life, I vow and devote myself to love, to honour, and protect it.

Dorothy. Valentine!

Queen Bee. (*Who has come down. Aside to her.*) Don't believe him, miss!

Dorothy. Begone!

Zero. (*Who has come down. Aside to* VALENTINE.) Valentine, you're a fool

Valentine. (*Aside to him.*) At least, I am my own master.

Queen Bee. (*Aside to her.*) I say, miss, don't believe him—you'd never think it—but there's sarpints that goes about in eel-skins. Look there! [*Pointing to* ZERO.

Dorothy. (*Aside to her.*) Ha! Who's he?

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) That's it: who is he? You don't know what's a brewin—even I don't. [ZERO *passing before* VALENTINE.

Zero. Miss Budd, I believe? Dorothy Budd?

Dorothy. Well, sir?

Zero. I am the bearer of a letter for you.

Dorothy. A letter! [ZERO *delivers it.*

Queen Bee. (*Aside to her.*) Don't touch it; there's a gunpowder-plot in it.

Dorothy. (*Opens it.*) So—from Belinda.

Zero. Belinda Icebrook.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) An answer to St. Cupid.

Zero. Allow me to hope that the gipsy may prophesy truly.

Dorothy. Sir!

Valentine. (*Aside: beckoning to* QUEEN BEE.) One word. [VALENTINE *and* QUEEN BEE *talk apart.*

Zero. Oh, Belinda made me her confidant: read me your gipsy letter.

Dorothy. Indeed, sir? (*Aside.*) Can it be?

Valentine. (*Aside to* QUEEN BEE.) Tell him of his peril: in any way preserve him, and there's fifty guineas.

Queen Bee. (*Aside to him.*) I'll do it, and you're not a sarpint after all?

Valentine. Fail not!

Queen Bee. I'll do it. Give him the pass-word to our gipsy-camp, and when once there—hush!

Dorothy. (*Aside.*) Read him my letter!

JUNO *runs on.*

Juno. Oh, Miss!

Queen Bee. (*Intercepting her. Aside to her.*) What's the matter?

Juno. (*Aside to* QUEEN BEE.) I inweigled the ensign into the strong-room as Miss desired, locked him up, and here's the key—no, that's the beer-cellar—here it is, and—

Queen Bee. (*Aside to her.*) Give 'em me. [*Taking both keys.*

Zero. (*Crossing to them.*) What's this conference? What key's that?

Dorothy. Mine, sir.

Zero. Pardon me. [*Takes key from* QUEEN BEE.

Queen Bee. (*Aside.*) He's got the beer-cellar. (*To* ZERO.) And now, sir, if you'll give me them five shillings, I'm good to go.

Zero. Go.

Queen Bee. Gone, my sir! [*Exit.*

Zero. You will pardon me, Miss Budd, but— [*A ring at the bell.*

Juno. That's the Doctor's own ring. [*Runs off.*

Zero. Oh, your father?

Enter DOCTOR BUDD.

Budd. Bless me! a stranger here! Well, I never can stop out but—Val—Dolly—why—what's the matter? Any bad news in your letter?

Zero. Not at all, Doctor.

Budd. Indeed, sir! (*Aside.*) How does he know? And what may be your wishes, sir, with—

Zero. A friend of mine has already seen you.

Budd. Oh, ha! About his boys?

Zero. About his boys.

Budd. He promised to be here, and—

Zero. See. He's a man of his word.

Enter CHECKER.

Valentine. (*Aside.*) He's lost!

Budd. Good evening, sir. How are your olive branches?

Checker. Oh, I have brought the little boys.

Budd. You have?

Checker. Yes, and here they are:

[*Beckons, when enter an* Officer *and file of Soldiers.*

Budd. Soldiers!

Zero. You keep a rare academy, Doctor; but this (*showing Manifesto*) this is dangerous teaching.

Budd. (*Taking it.*) Manifesto! Chevalier! I see it all. (*Advancing to* VALENTINE.) The fiddle!—Jacobite music! and—Traitor!—Rebel!

Zero. Ha! ha!

Budd. Don't laugh, sir; pray don't laugh. I'm a loyal subject; and to think that my house should have harboured treason! Hang him! Draw and quarter him! Why, Dorothy, and do you cling to him?

Dorothy. Yes—to the death!

Valentine. You hear, sir?

Budd. And you?

Valentine. She has spoken for both! United; aye, to the death.

Zero. (*Aside.*) He never will be such a fool. But, Doctor, there is other treason in your house. This key——

Budd. The ale-cellar as I'm a doctor—and treason there!

Zero. (*Giving key to* CHECKER.) That wench will conduct you.

Juno. What me?

Checker. Silence!

(*Peremptorily places* JUNO *between two* Soldiers, *and with others following, goes off.*)

Budd. But Dorothy. (*Aside.*) How she hangs about him! And to be in love with a man without a head—for it's as good as gone!

Valentine. (*Aside to* ZERO.) Uncle, but this one grace: withdraw these men—leave the house, and a life of gratitude—

Zero. What! Respect yourself, and know me better, sir.

Budd. (*Aside.*) What is this? For true man and traitor, they're mighty intimate. Who's here?

Enter QUEEN BEE *without cloak or bonnet, guarded, with* CHECKER *and* JUNO.

Queen Bee. Well, I'm sure! half-a-dozen men with drawn bagonets upon one lone 'oman. (*Aside to* VALENTINE.) All right!

Valentine. (*Aside.*) Saved?

Zero. Checker—

Checker. We've searched the house and this woman's all we've found.

Queen Bee. All, and enough too.

Checker. (*Aside.*) The bird's flown, sir: has—[*Whispers to* ZERO.

Queen Bee. (*Aside to* VALENTINE.) Cloak and bonnet and other things—a leg over the wall, and off he was. Once with my people, and as well hunt for sixpence in the universal sea.

Zero. (*Aside to* CHECKER.) He can't be far off—withdraw your men; then follow me. As for this hag,—

Queen Bee. Do your worst—and they've told me what that is! Yes, I'm to be tried upon a drum-head, by a court-partial.

[CHECKER *withdraws the* Soldiers.

Zero. Nephew,—

Dorothy. Nephew!

Budd. His nephew!

Zero. Your way is with me.

Valentine. Not yet, uncle! and not alone.

Zero. You forget yourself, Sir Valentine.

All. Sir Valentine!

Valentine. Not so: Sir Valentine but remembers what he is, remembering her who henceforth adds a value to his name by bearing it. [*Exit* ZERO.

Dorothy. Father!

Budd. Not an usher! But a knight—perhaps a baronet?

Valentine. Even so.

Budd. And my Dolly will be a lady?

Valentine. Thus I greet her—Lady Valentine May!

Dorothy. Oh, what fairy-world is this!

Valentine. All's real. 'Tis you alone that give the hues of faery to the world of truth.

Juno. La, Lady May! And all along, Queen Bee here promised it! What a fortin'!

Queen Bee. (*To* JUNO.) Isn't that a husband for sixpence and an old thimble? But I always were too cheap.

Budd. Well, but still I—I—and where's your cousin?—where's George?

Valentine. Hush!

Budd. What?

Dorothy. Hush!

Queen Bee. Hush! Axe—block—Tower-Hill!

Budd. What! George! A traitor! a—

Valentine. Hush! Thanks to the sibyl here, I hope he's safe: and with that word, forget him.

Budd. I'm in such a maze and—and—you a baronet—and—what brought you here?

Valentine. What brought me here? Why, Dorothy's fortune.

Dorothy. (*To* QUEEN BEE.) You never told—

Queen Bee. Not a syllable. (*Aside.*) And all for sixpence and a silver thimble!

Valentine. No, and yet I conned it. And so, my curiosity awakened, I came in idle sport to find happiness in earnest.

Dorothy. And do you really think so?

Valentine. Think so! Aye, by St. Cupid! [*Embraces her.*

THE END.

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